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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROBERT P. CASEY, Jr., a Senator from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, Lord in all seasons and for all reasons, help us to live lives that give You glory. Give us strength to do our duty, to stand for right and to give thanks at the remembrance of Your holiness. Help us to seek to serve rather than to be served and to treat others as we desire them to treat us.

Give wisdom and discernment to our Senators. Help them to find ways to lift people from vicious cycles of poverty, discovering the correct balance between personal responsibility and governmental intervention. And Lord, we pray today for our troops in harm's way and we pray this prayer in Your strong Name.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable ROBERT P. CASEY, Jr., led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate.

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 29, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule 1, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ROBERT P. CASEY, Jr., a Senator from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CASEY of Pennsylvania thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, if he decides to make some remarks today, we will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent the morning business hour be extended to 12:30 today, with the time to be equally divided.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could say to the Chair through my distinguished friend, I asked consent that we be in morning business until 12:30 to complete our conversations with our caucuses because of the bill that is coming up.

Mr. President, I ask you approve that consent request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2881, the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization.

As a reminder, at 11 a.m. tomorrow, there will be a joint meeting of the Congress in the Hall of the House of Representatives with the Prime Minister of Ireland, Bertie Ahern.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the bill we hope to start legislating on after the caucuses today is an important piece of legislation, FAA reauthorization.

Last Thursday, I met in my office with representatives of various unions that deal with the airline industry—flight attendants, mechanics, and air traffic controllers. They had some opinions as to what was going on. An hour or two later, I met with the chief executive officers of the major airlines in our country today. They were terribly concerned about what goes on. The fuel costs for these airlines is now approaching 50 percent of their overall cost. I may be a few cents wrong in my illustration, but they said: We can't compete. We pay \$1.20 for a gallon of aviation fuel. In Europe they pay 70 cents. You cannot compete because the dollar has become so low in value around the world.

This is an extremely important bill. If there were ever a time we had to work in a bipartisan basis in order to approve legislation necessary to give the airline industry a chance to survive, then we must do it on this piece of legislation.

I will work with my Republican counterpart to see if we can see a way of each side offering amendments. I do not want to have to fill the so-called legislative tree. We have to be very careful. This is a tax bill. So I will have a conversation with my colleague this morning before our caucus to see if we can come up with a way to proceed on this legislation. It is very important legislation.

We have so many other things to do. We have the farm bill that is completed, basically, I understand. We are going to have to go to that soon because it expires the end of this week. We have the Consumer Products Safety Conference. That should be completed hopefully by the end of next week. We have the budget, our budget that we have to complete. Fortunately, on

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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